

## Living the Right Message

Judges 16:1-3

**Introduction** - Your actions demonstrate what you really believe about God.

- A. Samson made the hall of faithfulness in Heb 11:32 because he was a \_\_\_\_\_ man and faithful to his life's purpose
  - a. Samson ended the Philistine rule when he killed 1000 soldiers with a fresh jawbone of a donkey.
  - b. Samson judged Israel for \_\_\_\_\_ years (15:20)
  - c. Samson's entire life is often judged by the story of Samson and Delilah. But there is a story that precedes this that most skip over (16:1-3)
- B. This is a story of sending the right message by the way you live.

### Why did Samson go to Gaza?

- A. Facts about Gaza
  - 1. One of the \_\_\_\_\_ major cities in Philistia
  - 2. A separate king ruled each of these cities (see Jdg 3:3; 16:5)
- B. Things to note
  - 1. Samson did not go openly, but secretly.
  - 2. There is no indication that anyone saw him except the prostitute.
- C. Samson went to Gaza to continue fulfilling his life's purpose, to make sure the Philistines were making no attempt to control Israel.

### Why did Samson go to a prostitute?

- A. There are two actions to note
  - 1. Samson saw \_\_\_\_\_ a prostitute - the NLT wrongly omits this. Every other version has this action because it is in the Hebrew text (the original language of the book of Judges)
  - 2. What was the second action?
    - a. Note the following four translations
      - 1) NAS - [he] saw a harlot there, *and went in to her.*
      - 2) KJV - [he] saw there an harlot, and went in unto her.
      - 3) NIV - where he saw a harlot. He went in to spend the night with her.
      - 4) NLT - [he] spent the night with a prostitute.
    - b. Note that the NAS and KJV do not use the word *into*
      - 1) "In" is an adverb and indicates where Samson went (he went inside her house)

- 2) “To” or “unto” is a preposition with the prostitute as the object. Going to her does not require us to mean sex as the NIV and NLT imply.
- c. The Hebrew text literally reads, *he went in her*.
  - 1) This phrase is used 13 times in the Hebrew Bible
    - a) Ten times it refers to sex only because the c\_\_\_\_\_ is of marriage or conceiving (Gen 29:21,23; 30:3,4; 38:2,18; Deut 21:13; 22:13; 25:5; Ezek 23:44; Ruth 4:13).
    - b) Twice it clearly DOES NOT refer to sex
      - i. 2 Sam 12:24 – David went in where Bathsheba was and the next phrase is the sexual term;
      - ii. Jdg 4:22 – Barak went in Jael’s tent (the word tent is not in the Hebrew but the next sentence demands that we understand that as the location).
    - 2) Judges 16:1 – there is nothing in the context that demands us to understand this as a sexual act and the rest of the story does not line up with that interpretation.
- B. Samson saw the prostitute and secretly went in to her place of residence for a reason that lines up with his role as a judge.
  1. In Josh 2:1-11
    - a. Where did the spies that Joshua sent into Jericho go? - to a p\_\_\_\_\_ place.
    - b. Why did they go to such a place? – to find out the talk of the t\_\_\_\_\_.
    - c. What was the talk? – everyone was t\_\_\_\_\_ of the God of Israel for all the miraculous plagues he put on Egypt.
  2. In Judges 16:1 - Samson went in the prostitute’s place to find out if there was any talk of the Philistines strategizing against Israel.
- C. Word leaked out to the city leaders that Samson was in the prostitutes place
  1. They plot to k\_\_\_\_\_ Samson at first light by a surprise attack as he exits the city gate.
  2. They were s\_\_\_\_\_ all night (may have slept), thinking that Samson would not leave until sometime after sunrise.
- D. Samson discovered their plot and lay until m\_\_\_\_\_ and then got up (I doubt that he went to sleep but waited until the ambushers were asleep).

## What message was Samson sending?

### A. Samson's symbolic actions

1. Uprooted the city gate, its posts, and its iron bars (according to archeology this would weigh no less than four t\_\_\_\_\_, which would make this feat humanly impossible) – *you are not challenging me, but my God.*
2. Carried the city gate 40 miles to Hebron, an major I\_\_\_\_\_ city. *Your gate belongs to Israel.* (God promised this in Gen 22:17)
3. Carried the gate to the top of a m\_\_\_\_\_ - *the God of Israel is the almighty and His power extends everywhere.*
  - a. God communicated from mountains (Ex 3:1; Ps 74:2; 1 Kgs 18:20)
  - b. Pagans believed that some gods dwelled on mountains (e.g. Z\_\_\_\_\_ 's palace on Mt. Olympus).
  - c. Some believed that the God of Israel was the God of the mountains and his power was diminished elsewhere (see I Kgs 20:23)

### B. Samson's actions were pointing the Philistines to the one true God.

## Conclusion

### A. Truths about every believer

1. Eph 2:10 – we were created in Christ Jesus to do good w\_\_\_\_\_
2. Matt 5:16 – we are commanded to do good works in such a way that would point people to g\_\_\_\_\_ God.

### B. Do you believe that God CAN use you to accomplish His eternal plan? What do your actions say?

1. Do you default to pastors and missionaries as God's instrument? (*They know a lot more than me. They are more qualified*)
2. Be w\_\_\_\_\_ to be used by God and He will use you.

### C. Do you believe that prayer makes a difference? What do your actions say?

1. Do you lean on the "spiritual" people to pray because they are "more connected?"
2. Are YOU praying?
  - a. Jms 5:16 – prayer is powerful through a person who is r\_\_\_\_\_ related to God (definition of a righteous person).
  - b. Lk 7:7 – be p\_\_\_\_\_ in your prayers.

### D. Your actions reveal what you really believe – LIVE the right message – let your actions point people to the Lord.